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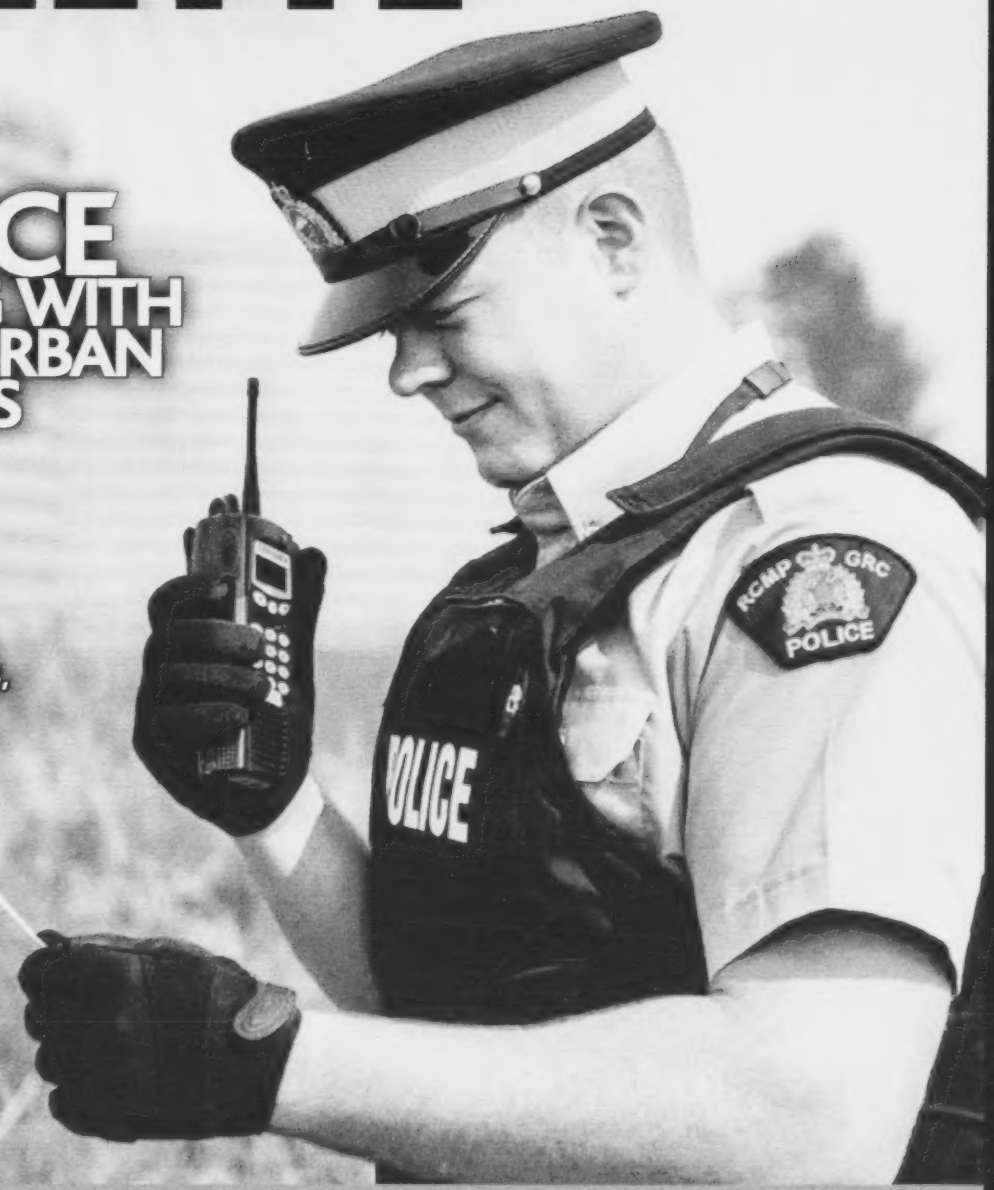
VOL.79, NO. 4, 2017

VISIBLE PRESENCE
CONNECTING WITH RURAL AND URBAN COMMUNITIES



VARIED LANDSCAPES
POLICING NOVA SCOTIA'S CITIES, TOWNS AND COASTS P. 7

TACKLING CRIME IN THE COUNTRY
COMMUNITY-LED PARTNERSHIPS KEY TO STOPPING PROPERTY CRIMES P. 12

FENTANYL FALLOUT
COUNTERING A CRISIS THAT'S SPREADING BEYOND BIG CITIES P. 16

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COVER SECTION

7 Policing Nova Scotia's communities and geographies
11 Livestock investigators support police and industry
12 RCMP works with rural communities to tackle property crime
14 Panel Discussion: Rural vs. urban policing: What outreach approaches work best?
16 How police are responding to the fentanyl crisis
18 Surrey Outreach Team engages at-risk community
19 Q&A: Detachment commanders talk about key skills, top priorities

DEPARTMENTS

4 Editorial message
5 News Notes
22 Just the Facts: Romance scams
23 Emerging Trends: Opportunity knocks with Experienced Police Officer Program
24 New Technology: Piloting a roadside drug test for impaired drivers
25 Ask an Expert: Cpl. David Botham on drug recognition and driving high
26 On the Leading Edge: Research explores profile of a good police interviewer
28 Last Page: Officers unite to build police station in Uganda

ON THE COVER:
Getting out in the community and connecting with residents is a good approach for any police officer, whether posted in an urban or rural detachment. Photo: Andrew Marshall, Saskatchewan RCMP

EDITORIAL MESSAGE

A SENSE OF PLACE

Leann Parker, RCMP

Does the landscape shape how police serve their communities? Do crimes in large urban centres differ from those in remote rural areas? While the realities of policing in downtown Surrey, B.C., won't be the same as a rural community in Nova Scotia, many of the challenges are remarkably similar: property theft, mental health problems, substance abuse and impaired driving, to name a few.

In this issue, we look at how geography and population density impact the policing needs of a community, and how RCMP officers respond with approaches that best target the problems in their cities, towns and counties.

For our cover story, Amelia Thatcher visited three communities in Nova Scotia: remote coastal Digby, greater Halifax and Bible Hill's mix of urban and rural areas. She looks at the day-to-day priorities of RCMP officers, whether it's connecting with residents on a remote island, addressing crime hot spots alongside their urban police partners or conducting joint traffic patrols to stop impaired driving in surrounding counties.

Partnerships also play a key role in the Prairies. Deidre Seiden writes about the often difficult task of policing in remote farming communities, where property crimes such as thefts and break and enters can easily go unnoticed. Police there are working with residents to set up crime watches, encourage video surveillance and form priority crime units to tackle high-volume crimes.

Seiden also talks to two RCMP livestock investigators in Alberta who work with the livestock industry to prevent and investigate cattle theft and act as knowledgeable liaisons between ranchers, farmers and police. This job tackles the usual cattle rustling as well as today's more lucrative crime: cattle fraud.

While property crimes also feature prominently in urban centres, substance abuse and mental health challenges are causing the most harm.

Look at any major city in Canada and you'll see the devastation that fentanyl is leaving in its wake. The deadly opioid first appeared on the streets of urban British Columbia in 2014. And the RCMP's largest detachment in Surrey has faced the brunt of the crisis.

In 2016, Surrey's 135A Street area was hit hard. Thatcher speaks to RCMP members and partner agencies with the Surrey Outreach Team, a pilot project aimed at helping those experiencing homelessness and addiction. The team works out of a small office in the community so it can conduct welfare checks, identify daily priorities and build relationships with vulnerable groups.

The fentanyl scourge has now spread to other areas, big and small, across the country and the challenges are mounting. For their safety and that of the community, front-line officers must receive proper drug awareness training and protective equipment, take mandatory naloxone training, prevent the entry of fentanyl into Canada, and step up drug investigations to shut off supply. They're also learning from experienced officers at the fentanyl epicentre in B.C.

We close our issue with a story about the big difference that a small group of RCMP officers and civilian employees made when inspired to help build a police station in Ongutoi, Uganda. Today, there's a permanent and visible police presence in the community and a safe place where local officers can work. It's what every police officer needs regardless of whether they're posted next to a highrise or a hayfield. ■

— Katherine Aldred

GAZETTE

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YUKON POLICE LEARN NORTHERN SKILL SET

By Amelia Thatcher

On the fifth and final night of the Wilderness Operations and Outdoor Skills Training Course in the Yukon, Cst. John Gillis built himself a shelter and hunkered down for a cold night. It was -29 C before wind chill, but the instructors leading the course wanted to make sure their officers were prepared to face any number of outdoor challenges.

"We have vast areas of wilderness and police some isolated places with extreme weather," says Gillis, a RCMP officer in Whitehorse, Yukon. "We frequently respond to calls in areas that are only accessible by boat, ATV, snowmobile or by air. You can find yourself a long way from help if something goes wrong."

That's why Gillis decided to take the Wilderness Operations course this past March. The six-day course teaches a range of useful skills for officers working in the North, including cold weather rescue techniques, navigation and survival skills. The course also included a presentation by hypothermia expert Gordon Giesbrecht.

The goal is to prepare officers so they can avoid emergency survival situations.

"One thing we drill into officers is that no member in the Yukon should be going on duty without the ability to start a fire," says RCMP Cpl. Cam Long, the lead instructor for the course. "We teach officers how to avoid getting in a situation they're not prepared for. I truly believe these skills could save a member's life."

In the Yukon, the majority of police deaths have occurred due to the environment — mostly cold weather and water. Because of this, Long and Sgt. Glenn Ramsay, who is in charge of RCMP training for the territory, developed the wilderness skills course in 2013, drawing from best practices in other jurisdictions.

Now in its fourth year, the program is available to all RCMP officers in the Yukon.

"Officers could be using these skills daily, for example if they go to remote accident scenes, if they're searching for overdue hunters, or if they respond to calls on or near water," says Ramsay. "Anytime, anywhere, anything can happen, so we want our police officers to be prepared." ■

Sgt. Glenn Ramsay, RCMP

In the Wilderness Operations and Outdoor Skills Training Course, officers learned rescue techniques, GPS and compass navigation, and survival skills.

STUDENTS SEE OUTCOME OF IMPAIRED DRIVING

By Deidre Seiden

Local high school students in Happy Valley-Goose Bay, N.L., witnessed the consequences of drinking and driving at the scene of a mock disaster.

Just outside Mealy Mountain Collegiate, students watched as the RCMP, fire department and paramedics arrived at a scene of twisted metal, lifeless bodies and victims trapped in the wreckage of a car after it collided with a snowmobile. The scenario took place last spring, right before graduation.

Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD) Labrador chapter, which organized the event, wanted the realistic scene to act as an eye-opener for students on the devastation caused by drinking and driving.

"Students can read about accidents caused by drunk driving in the media, but when they see it, when it looks real, it drives the message home," says RCMP Cpl. Christine Soucy, a community police officer from the Happy Valley-Goose Bay detachment, who helped plan the event.

To begin, students assembled in the gym and listened to the 911 call before heading outside to where the scenario was brought to life.

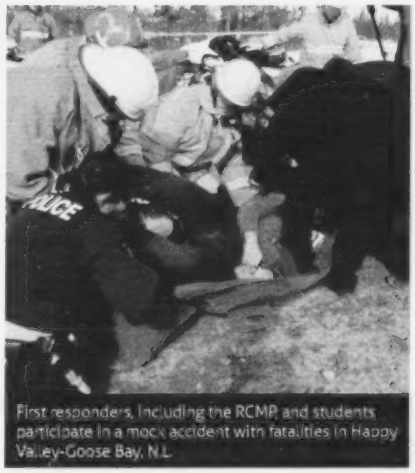
Soucy says she was impressed by how real it looked. The victims were played by students and had realistic injuries created with special effects makeup. The fire department used the Jaws of Life to free two girls trapped in the back of the car.

The students watched as one classmate, bleeding from the head and yelling, was arrested for impaired driving causing death.

"They got to see front and centre what it looks like to be handcuffed and driven away," says Soucy.

Angela Wareham, the vice president of MADD Labrador chapter, says that the court docket in Happy Valley-Goose Bay shows that drinking and driving is a problem.

"And it's not just in Goose Bay. There are four people killed across Canada every day by somebody making the decision to drive impaired," says Wareham. "We might not stop kids from drinking or doing drugs, but by making this very impactful statement, we might be able to stop them from getting behind the wheel after having a drink." ■



Robert Richards, MADD Labrador

First responders, including the RCMP and students, participate in a mock accident with fatalities in Happy Valley-Goose Bay, N.L.

RCMP FEATURED IN FBI TRAINING VIDEO

By Deidre Seiden

Representing the RCMP in a training video for the Federal Bureau of Investigation was a first for Insp. Peter Trottier.

"Having spent a number of years at both Depot and the Canadian Police College, I've had many opportunities to speak in front of audiences," says Trottier. "As we were filming, it dawned on me that the audience here wasn't simply the FBI but potentially all of law enforcement in the U.S."

The video will be used to educate U.S. police officers on Foreign Fugitive Files. Specifically, it will show officers how to query the National Crime Information Center (NCIC) — a police database — and what to do if they get a hit on someone with an outstanding Canadian arrest warrant.

"The Foreign Fugitive File is one of the more unique files within NCIC, in that our law enforcement agencies don't populate or contribute records to this file," says Stephen Fischer, FBI spokesperson.

The Foreign Fugitive Files are populated and maintained strictly by the RCMP and INTERPOL. They contain information on persons wanted in connection with offences committed outside the United States.

"Not only does the RCMP enter the information into NCIC on behalf of all other Canadian law enforcement agencies, but in the event of a hit, we act as the liaison between the U.S. and the arresting agency in Canada," says Krista Bowman, in charge of the RCMP's NCIC unit.

In one scenario in the video, a car is pulled over and the police officer runs an NCIC check on an expired Ontario driver's licence.

The person comes back with a hit on the Foreign Fugitive File as wanted in Canada for fraud.

Trottier is interviewed about the RCMP, how it collects and enters information for NCIC, and the steps that police must take to initiate the extradition process.

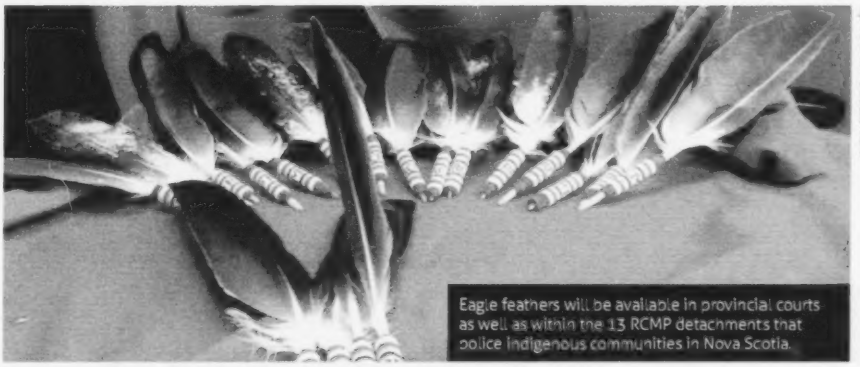
Once the warrant is confirmed, the process of obtaining a U.S. extradition warrant is initiated.

The database, which connects U.S. law enforcement with partners around the world, is an important tool for the FBI and RCMP.

"It provides vital information for the safety and efficiency of the United States law enforcement personnel," says Fischer. "It also assists Canada in locating and extraditing, if applicable, wanted persons." ■

EAGLE FEATHER FLIES INTO NOVA SCOTIA DETACHMENTS

By Amelia Thatcher



Cpl. De-Anne Sack, RCMP

Eagle feathers will be available in provincial courts as well as within the 13 RCMP detachments that police indigenous communities in Nova Scotia.

RCMP detachments and provincial courts in Nova Scotia will soon be providing indigenous victims, witnesses, suspects and police officers with the option to swear legal oaths on an eagle feather.

The feather will be used in the same way as a Bible or an affirmation. Those testifying in court or signing statements would hold their hand on the eagle feather while swearing an oath to tell the truth.

"To many First Nations people, when you give them a Bible, it doesn't mean anything," says RCMP Cpl. De-Anne Sack, Nova Scotia's Aboriginal policing analyst who came up with the idea. "But if you give them an eagle feather, it carries more significance, power and clout."

In First Nations culture, the eagle is considered sacred because it flies the highest and closest to the Creator. The eagle feather is a symbol of spirituality and is used in many indigenous traditions throughout North America.

"It provides a chance to introduce our culture and spirituality into the current justice system," says Catherine Benton, the first Mi'kmaq, female Aboriginal judge in Nova Scotia. "This will help begin the process of providing a more inclusive and relevant justice system for First Nations peoples."

After proposing the eagle feather to Nova Scotia's courts, Sack thought it would also be useful at the detachment level for police officers affirming documents such as affidavits, summons to court and subpoenas. The feather could also be on-hand for indigenous victims and suspects who give sworn statements at RCMP detachments.

"One of our goals in providing the eagle feather as an option is to bring more indigenous cultural awareness to the force," says C/Supt. Marlene Snowman, the Criminal Operations officer in Nova Scotia. "I hope it will demonstrate to our indigenous employees that we value their culture and show that it has a place within the RCMP."

The eagle feathers are expected to be distributed in October to 13 detachments in Nova Scotia that police indigenous communities.

"As an Aboriginal member, I would feel pride going to a detachment and opting for the eagle feather," says Sack. "We're one step closer to bridging First Nations communities and the RCMP." ■

Amelia Thatcher

Cst. Colin Helm talks to as many people as he can during his patrols in Digby, N.S., often engaging with local fishermen and the coast guard.

URBAN VS. RURAL

POLICING NOVA SCOTIA'S UNIQUE COMMUNITIES AND GEOGRAPHIES

By Amelia Thatcher

At 8 a.m. Monday morning, the Digby detachment in southwest Nova Scotia was just getting busy. The night before, a hiker's emergency beacon went off, signaling a distress call for help.

As officers filed into the small 16-person detachment, S/Sgt. Dave Chubbs, the commander, told them about the situation.

Only two members were working when the call came in at 9:30 p.m. for the missing hiker near East Cranberry Lake, about 50 kilometres from Digby, deep in the backcountry woods. Since the officers weren't familiar with the area, they called the Department of Natural Resources to help out.

After making no progress finding the woman, the RCMP decided to start the volunteer search and rescue team and call in extra officers from a neighbouring detachment. After several more hours, they still hadn't reached the woman, so they called the Joint Rescue Coordination Centre run by the coast guard and military.

By 3 a.m. the risk manager called out the Department of National Defence, which dispatched a cormorant helicopter to fly in and make the successful rescue.

"It just goes to show you how many partners we have to call on in emergency situations," says Chubbs. "Every commander knows they'll have to rely on their neighbours at some point, especially in these rural areas."

RURAL: DIGBY, N.S.

The Digby RCMP detachment polices approximately 20 communities in Digby County. This rural area of about 18,000 residents is a microcosm of Canada's diversity: there's a Mi'kmaq First Nations community called Bear River, two islands with isolated fishing villages, and three African Nova Scotian communities with historic roots dating back to the 18th century.

In many ways, the unique populations and expansive geographies are the biggest challenges faced by rural detachments like Digby. The remoteness of some areas can make it difficult for RCMP officers to respond to calls, based on the sheer distance they have to travel.

"If something happens in the city, the cavalry shows up. In the rural areas, the closest officer for backup could be 40 kilometres away," says Supt. Martin Marin, the district policing officer for southwest Nova Scotia. "You really have to know who your partners are and use all resources."

Long and Brier islands are perfect examples of hard-to-reach rural communities. Located southwest of Digby, the islands sit off the tip of a long peninsula, which is fittingly named the Digby neck. The neck takes just over half an hour to drive before the road dead-ends at a small harbour. There, a ferry runs every hour to Long Island, and further

still, a second ferry runs to Brier Island. The whole journey can take just over an hour — if you time the trip with the ferries.

"We're a slave to the ferry schedule," notes Cst. Colin Helm, the school liaison officer for Digby detachment. He says the remote location of the islands has made the communities there unique from anything he's policed before.

"When you get on the ferry, it's almost like you're crossing a border into another country," says Helm. "As soon as people see the police cruiser coming up the Digby neck, they put it up on Facebook and text all their neighbours. They know we're coming before we even set foot on the islands."

Digby RCMP don't get too many calls to Long and Brier islands. This is partly because of the small population — about 500 on both islands.

"This is as rural as rural gets — trust me," says Helm, referring to Brier Island. "Everyone on the island lives on these two streets, so you really get to know your neighbours out here."

Stacks of metal lobster traps and buoys line the gravel road next to the ocean. Most of the houses here are weathered, with boats and ATVs parked outside on big grassy lots.

On his patrols, Helm waves to everyone he sees. Most of them are familiar faces, and he knows the backstories of each person.

"Janet likes to walk up and down these roads," says Helm, as he waves out the window to an elderly woman shuffling down the street with a walker in the rain. She turns and gives him a big smile and waves as he passes by.

Helm says one of the most important parts of rural policing is visibility — community members want to see police officers walking or driving up and down the streets to feel safe. It's often on these patrols that officers spot things that are out of the ordinary.

Officers at the Bible Hill detachment set up roadside checks on a daily basis to combat impaired driving.

Amelia Thatcher

"I like coming down the side roads because you never know what you're going to find," says Helm. "You can be doing your rounds and something will catch your eye — someone with mental health issues, someone who's intoxicated, or even a domestic violence case."

Helm tries to make it out to the islands a few times per month. The rest of his time is spent visiting schools, planning safety initiatives, problem solving with communities and responding to general duty calls when the need arises. Officers here often get to investigate files to the end, following them through to court. There aren't specialized teams or court liaison officers immediately available at the small detachment.

"Working in the rural areas, you almost have to be a jack of all trades," says Helm. "But I love it. That's what's so amazing about rural policing — you learn so much every day."

Halifax District RCMP uses statistics to map out crime hotspots in communities. This helps police determine what areas need more boots on the ground.

Amelia Thatcher

URBAN: HALIFAX, N.S.

A shift at the Halifax District RCMP's Sackville detachment begins with a muster meeting. Eight general duty police officers file into a boardroom at the detachment, beginning their four days on duty after three days off. Unlike Digby, which operates an average of 19 hours per day with police on call for the remainder, Halifax District follows a 24-7 policing model.

"Even though it's Wednesday, today is like a Monday morning for us," says Sgt. Craig Smith, the commander for Watch 3. He's in charge of approximately 20 officers at three out of Halifax's six detachments: Lower Sackville, Cole Harbor and Tantallon. He also keeps tabs on Halifax's Musquodoboit Harbour, Sheet Harbour and North Central detachments during his shifts.

As watch commander, Smith oversees the day-to-day running of Watch 3, offering leadership, direction and a helping hand when needed.

"My job is to say 'what do you need?' to officers and get them those resources," says Smith. "If they update me on what's going on, I'll trust them to do their job. I'm just here for support."

Smith assigns officers additional tasks based on the latest crime hotspots — areas that have high crime density. For the past eight years, Halifax District has used numbers and statistics to inform their policing tactics. Every three weeks, the watch commanders, the leads from investigative sections and officers in-charge meet to go over the latest crime trends and statistics.

Sheila Serfas is the crime analyst who reviews data from investigations and calls

for service, and leads the meetings. She notes what the current crime trends are and maps out the crime hotspots, showing the numbers and types of crime in different areas.

While smaller, rural detachments don't use statistical analysis very often due to a lower frequency of crime, Halifax District has found the model invaluable.

"When we started the process of mapping, these streets were littered with property damage, motor vehicle accidents, you name it. Now it's not anything like that," says Serfas. "In the summer we used to see 150 thefts from vehicles per month, now we barely see 30."

Serfas also takes the numbers a step further, digging deeper to offer recommendations to police. "Not only do we look at the data, but also what can we do about it," she says. Based on the data, the District's top priorities are mental health, youth and drugs, since they take up the majority of officers' time.

While some crimes can be predicted with data, others can happen without a moment's notice. During a recent shift, Halifax District RCMP was on high alert. Three major calls came in within hours of each other, and it was Smith's job as watch commander to co-ordinate.

"We had a call for a car bomb, a school shooter and a crash involving a school bus," recalls Smith, explaining how unpredictable and busy urban policing can be. "You've always got to have the radio on and run to whatever's happening."

Smith says it's extremely important to know what resources are at your disposal, especially when there are major calls. One of the RCMP's key partners is the Halifax Regional Police (HRP). The HRP polices Halifax's downtown core, including the former cities of Bedford and Dartmouth, while the RCMP is responsible for suburbs like Sackville and the surrounding communities of what was known as Halifax County.

"Because of the geographic area, we work together on a daily basis," says Halifax Police Chief Jean-Michel Blais. "The neat thing is you can have a crime committed in RCMP territory that's being investigated by HRP and vice versa."

Blais says the two agencies are seamlessly integrated, even sharing a radio frequency to maintain continuity. Along with working together on the front line, the Halifax District and HRP also have integrated criminal intelligence teams, including a major crimes section, special enforcement sections and support teams such as legal advising, emergency response and forensics.

"For the RCMP, it's great to have the HRP because they know every nook and cranny of the city," says C/Supt. Lee Bergerman, officer in-charge of the Halifax District RCMP. "For HRP, they have access to our specialized units as well as our wealth of Canadian policing knowledge and best practices."

Blais also thinks the partnership is invaluable.

"In an integrated unit, you check your badges at the door," he says. "When rubber hits the road it's about the work getting done — we have the same goal."

URBAN AND RURAL: BIBLE HILL, N.S.

An hour's drive north of Halifax is a quaint community called Bible Hill, which is part of three communities in the RCMP's Colchester District. The small farming village sits beside the larger town of Truro, separated by the Salmon River. On one side is the RCMP's jurisdiction, and on the other

OPERATION THINK OF ME

By Amelia Thatcher

A picture can say a thousand words — especially when it's a drawing from a local kid, asking you to drive safely. That's why Cst. Colin Helm recruited the help of local elementary school children for Operation Think of Me, a safe driving campaign in Digby, N.S.

"Our goal was to get drivers to slow down and be careful in school zones," says Helm, the local school liaison officer. "Rather than us [police] spreading the message, we thought it would have more impact coming from a child."

Helm gave students at five elementary schools in the Digby area a piece of paper and asked them to draw messages. Some drew pictures about crossing the street safely, while others asked drivers to put away their cellphones when behind the wheel. Police handed out the drawings to drivers during roadside stops.

Amelia Thatcher

More than 500 drawings like these were handed out to drivers for Operation Think of Me, a safe driving campaign in Digby, N.S.

"The kids were so excited, they felt like they were part of something huge," says Helm.

On the back of the drawings, a printed message from the Mounties reminds drivers to slow down and watch for children in school zones.

Helm launched Operation Think of Me in Digby in 2014, and since then, has done a version of the program almost every year. He credits the community's excitement and support to the success of the program.

"It's something small but it's part of the big picture of road safety," he says. "It's all about thinking globally and taking those bigger police problems and acting locally."

This winter, Helm plans to get local kids to draw on the paper bags used to pack liquor in at the Nova Scotia Liquor Control stores. The goal will be to discourage drinking and driving over the holiday season.

"We can't bring children to the side of the road to talk to everyone, so this is a good way to get the message across: slow down and drive safely," says Helm.

is Truro Police Service.

Although the two police agencies patrol adjacent communities, they are not integrated on the same level as Halifax District. For the most part, they patrol their own jurisdictions, only cross-pollinating in the event of a serious incident.

This is partly because the specialized teams such as major crimes and traffic services for northeast Nova Scotia are located in Bible Hill. In this regard, the Bible Hill detachment has all the benefits of a larger detachment, while also giving members the opportunity to be self-sufficient.

Colchester County shares many of the same priorities as Halifax District: mental health, youth engagement and drugs are all at the top of their list, as well as alcohol abuse and impaired driving.

To combat drinking and driving, officers set up checkpoints once per day, blocking off intersections to check for sobriety as well as drivers' valid licence, registration and up-to-date vehicle stickers.

"We pick a different spot every day, it's a game of cat and mouse," says S/Sgt. Allan Carroll, commander for Colchester County RCMP. Carroll says working in a smaller detachment means everyone helps out where they can — even the commander. "I'm old school. I like to get out and work with the guys."

For local school liaison officer Cst. Lorilee Morash, alcohol and drug education is also a priority. Each year before school lets out for the summer, she goes into high schools and runs workshops for students. Youth have a chance to test drive a go-kart, play sports and run around the playground — all with impaired goggles on.

As Morash organizes the teens into groups, she encourages them to consider how hard even the simplest task, like walking, can be when intoxicated.

"In the rural areas like this, the only way to get around is driving cars, trucks or ATVs," says Morash. "This is a reminder for them to think twice about doing that if they've been drinking or doing drugs."

The Bible Hill detachment often does joint patrols with the Department of Natural Resources, checking for impaired all-terrain vehicle drivers in the summer and snowmobile drivers in the winter.

"Every time we go out patrolling [the trails], we find someone who's impaired," says Cst. Gavin Naime, an officer in Bible Hill. "But it's not about handing out tickets, it's about being out there. Our presence is often enough to deter people."

Although the priorities of different RCMP detachments change with the populations they police and their location on a map, for the officers running them, the goal is the same.

"I enjoy interacting with people — it's why I became a police officer," says Naime. "I want to support those who need it. Making a difference in someone's day is my goal. If I can do that once per shift, I'm happy." ▪

BY THE NUMBERS

Digby County:
- 1 detachment: **Digby**
- **Population:** ~17,300

RCMP officers: 16

Halifax Regional Municipality:
- 7 detachments: **Lower Sackville, Cole Harbour, Tantallon, Preston, Musquodoboit Harbour, Sheet Harbour and North Central**
- **Population:** ~403,000
- **RCMP officers:** 193
- **HRP officers:** 531

Colchester County:
- 3 detachments: **Bible Hill, Stewiacke, Tatamagouche**
- **Population:** ~38,000
- **RCMP officers:** 35

Amelia Thatcher

Cst. Lorilee Morash runs workshops at local high schools to remind students about the dangers of impaired driving — a big problem in Colchester County, N.S.

FIELD WORK

LIVESTOCK INVESTIGATORS SUPPORT POLICE, INDUSTRY

By Deidre Seiden

The week Cpl. Chris Reister spent on an Alberta ranch in 2010 was one of the most memorable of his career as an RCMP livestock investigator.

Alongside the Alberta Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals and Livestock Identification Services (LIS), Reister captured 200 cows and 200 horses in need of care and attention.

"It was a fun time and a successful prosecution, but there was some humane issues going on with the animals," says Reister. "It felt good to get the livestock out of that situation, on some good feed and nursed back to health."

Sarah Grainger

Cpl. Andrew Grainger (left), a livestock investigator with the RCMP in Alberta, is a liaison between the RCMP and producers in the province's livestock industry.

EXPERT RESOURCE

Reister is one of two livestock investigators in Alberta. He's responsible for the southern portion of the province while Cpl. Andrew Grainger covers the north, from Red Deer to the border of the Northwest Territories.

Reister grew up on a farm in rural Alberta, eventually raising his own cattle before joining the RCMP. To this day he has his own horses.

His experience in agriculture gave him the skills needed to work in the position, which he's held for the last eight years.

"It's not just a job, it's a way of life for me," says Reister.

Dressed in jeans, boots and, if they want, a cowboy hat, these investigators are often referred to as cowboy cops.

Alberta has the only permanent positions, while British Columbia is working to fill a long-vacant post and Saskatchewan is hoping to create a similar role.

While the livestock investigators serve both the industry and members of the RCMP in Alberta, they're often called upon for advice on cases outside the province.

"The police need us to help them navigate some of the cases they come across," says Grainger. "It's important to be able to connect with and talk to farmers and ranchers and also understand what they're going through."

"And on the flip side, a lot of the farmers and ranchers lose interest in working with a police officer who doesn't know what they're talking about. Having us as a liaison between the two is quite important."

CRIME IN EVERY INDUSTRY

It's the job of the livestock investigators to work with the livestock industry — the second largest industry in the province — to prevent theft and fraud.

"Cattle are no different than a lot of the other commodities or property," says Reister.

About 600 head of cattle go missing every year in Alberta from theft alone.

The crimes are challenging to solve as rural areas are less populated, which means there are few if any witnesses. "It's hard to get a step ahead of the criminals," says Reister. "We work closely with our partners, the livestock inspectors from LIS, to do so."

Shawn McLean, the manager of LIS, which partially funds the two RCMP positions, says that crime has shifted from cattle rustling to cattle fraud.

"The modern-day cow thief robs from the bank, not from the people," says McLean.

Grainger never realized how frequently people try to sell financed cattle until he became a livestock investigator in 2015.

"With the price of cattle being so high, it's very lucrative for people to be selling them in their own name and pocketing the money," says Grainger.

"Without cattle financing, the industry wouldn't survive," says Reister. "So we try to do our best to protect the lending institutions."

ROUNDUP

But overall, the most frequent calls they receive concern stray animals.

"It's a serious matter when stray animals are reported to police," says Grainger.

This past winter, Grainger dealt with a large number of stray horses outside of Mayerthorpe. An elderly man was killed on the highway after his vehicle hit the group of horses.

"The detachment didn't know what to do, so they called us," says Grainger. "We set up a program and trapped all the horses and seized them."

Having a working knowledge of the industry is necessary to be effective in the role, which most Mounties don't have these days, says Grainger.

"It's no different than the other specialized areas in policing where you need a good working knowledge of the industry," says Reister. "You can't just ask any police officer to jump on a horse and rope a stray steer." ▪

KNOW YOUR NEIGHBOUR

RCMP WORKS WITH COMMUNITIES TO TACKLE THEFT, VANDALISM

By Deidre Seiden

Andrea Marshall, RCMP

Property crimes such as break and enters, auto theft and vandalism are a concern for police and residents of rural communities.

According to Statistics Canada, the volume and severity of crime is on the rise in Canada for the first time in 12 years, jumping five per cent in 2015 from 2014.

And rural communities are not untouched by this increased crime rate. With theft and vandalism rising, so has the rhetoric of farmers and rural residents arming themselves to protect their property.

In Saskatchewan, a Facebook group called Farmers with Firearms posts, "If the RCMP is delayed, we will take matters into our own hands."

It's this kind of talk that has prompted RCMP detachment commander S/Sgt. Ken Morrison to ask an important question at town hall meetings in his community of Blackfalds, Alta. — is property worth your life?

"If [residents are] engaging, someone is going to get hurt," says Morrison.

Blackfalds detachment is nestled between Alberta's two largest cities, Calgary and Edmonton, and located just outside the City of Red Deer.

Morrison, or one of his police officers, attends every single town hall-type meeting in his jurisdiction to engage with the communities, answer police-related questions and curb talk of vigilante justice before it happens.

Property crimes such as break and enters, auto theft and vandalism, are the number one concern of residents in the area and a priority for the detachment.

"If you look at theft of vehicles and break and enters — especially in the rural areas — they're being plagued because they're ripe for the picking," says Morrison.

EYES AND EARS

Cpl. Mel Zurevinsky, who works with the RCMP's Crime Prevention/Crime Reduction section in Regina, Sask., is aware of the Facebook group and rising concerns about rural crime in Saskatchewan.

"Rural municipalities and detachments have been bombarded with a lot of calls of rural theft and rural activity where there is vigilantism," says Zurevinsky. "We're not condoning anyone advocating taking matters into their own hands. We want people through Rural Crime Watch to communicate what they see and pass that information on to police."

Rural Crime Watch is a community-led, police-supported crime prevention and crime reduction partnership. It was thriving in Saskatchewan in the early 2000s but engagement in the program dwindled over the years.

Zurevinsky spoke at the Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities (SARM) convention in the spring about revitalizing the program.

"We can't be there at all times so the residents are our eyes and ears," says Zurevinsky.

He's updated materials to distribute to rural municipalities, given presentations at town meetings and spoken with several media outlets to spread the message that working with the police is the best solution.

Right now there are approximately 22 communities in Saskatchewan in the process of starting or revitalizing their programs.

Zurevinsky praises the Rural Municipality of Edenwold, Sask., for the success of its Rural Crime Watch program. He often uses Edenwold as an example.

The group uses technology to its advantage — about 60 per cent of its 90 members use WhatsApp, a group chat app, to share information instantly in real time on any suspicious activity in their community. As an added benefit, a few local RCMP officers are also part of the group chat.

Tim Brodt, a councillor with the Rural Municipality of Edenwold and president of its Rural Crime Watch, says the goal of the group is to stop criminals from stopping in their area.

"One of the things we focus on with Rural Crime Watch is to get to know your neighbours so you know which vehicles are driving around," says Brodt. "If you see one that looks suspicious, write down the licence plate and date of when it happened and share it on the app. This way we have a bit of recourse if something happens."

Zurevinsky says the idea of Rural Crime Watch is simple. In addition to attending a few meetings a year, members are asked to be vigilant as they go about their everyday routine. If they see anything suspicious, they keep a record of it, share it and report it to the police if warranted.

"Our crime analysts can take that information and use it to identify these people and where the crime is occurring," says Zurevinksy.

A prime example is the Jospeh Palmer case that was recently tried in Saskatchewan. In this case, Kim Audette, a crime analyst

with the RCMP, and Cst. Holly LeFrancois, an investigator on the case, worked together resulting in a conviction on 114 charges of rural break and enters.

KEY PIECE OF EVIDENCE

In Manitoba, Cpl. Mike Boychuk, of the RCMP's Brandon detachment, says crime analysis is an important tool in rural communities.

"Most people are habitual — even criminals," says Boychuk. "If they do break and enters and enjoy using a tire iron, they'll use that tire iron at several break and enters. If we find those patterns and find that key piece of evidence to identify the suspect, then we know we're on the right track and we can solve a lot of crimes."

In most cases, crimes in rural areas are a challenge to solve.

"There are vast areas and not many witnesses," says Boychuk. "Just last week we had four break and enters in the town of Souris. We look for evidence, we try and find witnesses and we try and solve them, but it's difficult."

He says they're always looking for tire impressions, footprint impressions and fingerprints, but what's particularly helpful is video surveillance.

"We really encourage people to purchase surveillance," says Boychuk. "People get alarms for their property, which is good to try and deter unwanted people on their property, but at the same time, it's difficult to get a suspect when the travel time out to a spot could be 15 minutes to in excess of an hour."

Sometimes, all it takes is finding one piece of the puzzle, like capturing a suspect on camera, that leads to another that leads to solving a case. Just this past winter, Boychuk says police were able to crack a rural crime ring.

Five men were charged with stealing vehicles, guns and tools from properties in southwest Manitoba.

It started with a break and enter on a rural property. The victim reported that a few of his credit cards were stolen, one of which was used a short time later at a convenience store in Brandon.

The RCMP acted quickly and obtained video surveillance from the store and was able to identify suspects based on those images. Shortly after that, the forensic identification unit extracted a fingerprint off a stolen vehicle that matched a known criminal.

"Those two real key events pointed us in the right direction," says Boychuk. "Once we were able to get suspects into custody, we used some key interviewing techniques and confessions were obtained. With the arrest of four men, we solved over 100 crimes."

DEDICATED UNIT

In central Alberta, the Priority Crimes Task Force has operated since October 2014 to address the rise in rural crime.

The task force is a joint effort among the RCMP in Blackfalds, Red Deer City, Sylvan Lake, Innisfail, Bashaw, Ponoka, Rimbey and Rocky Mountain House, and the Lacombe Police Service. Each contributes police officers to the plainclothes unit.

The unit actively uses intelligence that's been gathered by front-line police officers in their investigations to link crimes. "They've been successful in taking down several organizations that have been actively involved in property crime," says Morrison.

Morrison was looking for yet another way to tackle rural crime in his district without adding more work to his already-stretched general-duty police officers.

The success of the Priority Crimes Task Force inspired Morrison to approach Red Deer and Lacombe Counties, in which Blackfalds operates, to share the cost of funding two enhanced positions to form a General Investigation Section (GIS). The GIS will focus on property and other serious crimes in those counties.

Morrison asked specifically for two plainclothes officers. He didn't want extra uniformed officers as they would just get lost in the day-to-day of the detachment and not make the difference he was looking for.

"I think that's one of the things that really sold it because we weren't asking for just another police officer, we were asking for something specific — something to target what the public and police both see as one of the major concerns right now," says Morrison.

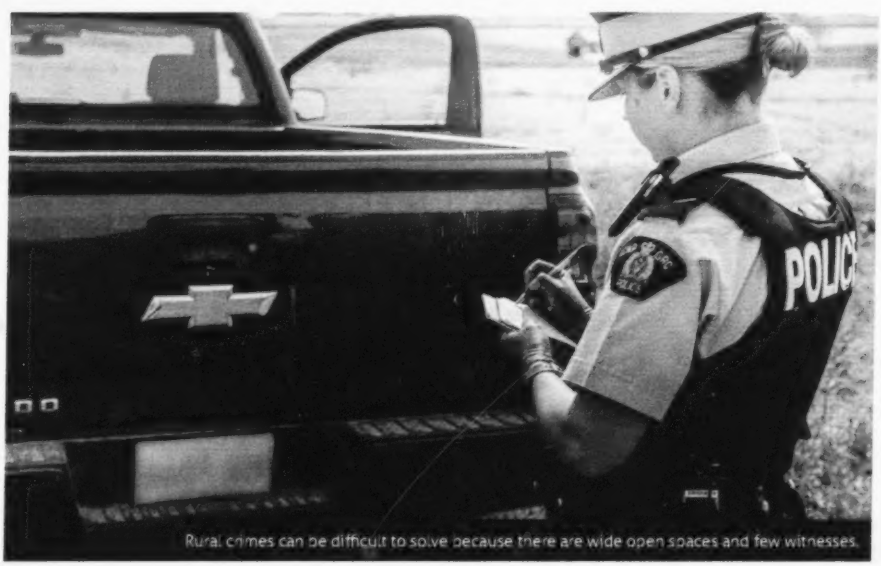
The new GIS will have several strategic benefits. It will lighten the workload of general-duty members allowing them to be proactive instead of reactive, and the dedicated unit will be able see investigations from beginning to end and connect crimes from one investigation to the next.

The RCMP and counties are currently working out the details of the contract. The unit will work out of Blackfalds detachment but will service the entirety of both Red Deer and Lacombe counties, which are also served by other detachments and municipal police services.

Morrison hopes the new unit will be operational by the summer of 2018.

With this new agreement, he's pleased to see that the rural areas, both the counties and the residents, are stepping up and becoming more engaged in tackling the issue.

"I think for a long time we saw policing was simply put in the hand of the police officers," says Morrison. "Now through active engagement with communities and incorporating everybody together, there's a better understanding that policing is a community effort." ■



Rural crimes can be difficult to solve because there are wide open spaces and few witnesses.

Andrew Marshall, RCMP

B.C. RCMP

Cst. Chuck Marjara of the Diversity and Community Engagement unit in Surrey, B.C., meets with newcomer and refugee youth to talk about personal safety and when and how to contact police if they need to.

RURAL VS. URBAN POLICING: WHAT OUTREACH APPROACHES WORK BEST?

THE PANELLISTS

- **Cst. Chuck Marjara, Diversity and Community Engagement, Surrey, B.C., RCMP**
- **A/Commr. Curtis Zablocki, commanding officer of F Division, Regina, Sask., RCMP**
- **Sherry Bray, Public Affairs Branch, Kentucky State Police**
- **S/Sgt. Jeffrey Duggan, Ontario Provincial Police, Kenora detachment**

Whether an officer's beat is in a remote, rural landscape or a densely populated downtown core, connecting with members of the community is essential. But what approaches work best when residents are spread out over many miles or, alternately, condensed in a small area with diverse needs? We asked our panellists which tools and methods help them build relationships with their communities wherever they may be.

CST. CHUCK MARJARA

Policing at its core is about earning public trust, and this transcends the rural or urban divide. In smaller areas, community policing may mean the community in its entirety. In a city like Surrey, where more than 50 per cent of our population is from a visible minority, we believe the best approach is to get out and engage with members of the community one on one. This includes learning about their culture and attending associated spaces and events.

An example of this is our current outreach to the Muslim community. The first step was to identify local leaders within the community and meet with them to discuss safety concerns and opportunities to work together with the overall goal of public safety. Two strong recommendations came from this meeting: educate officers about the community and positively engage with the community by attending events and presentations.

Internal education: In addition to offering diversity workshops to staff, the Diversity Unit is in the process of creating a video that showcases members from the Muslim community talking about topics such as what to do when entering a mosque, the purpose of the hijab and how to engage with the community as a whole. The unit also hosted an Iftar event during the month of Ramadan that brought together more than 100 members of the Muslim community and local police officers to learn about one another over a delicious meal.

Positive engagement: After the shooting at the Canadian mosque earlier this year, the Surrey RCMP Diversity Unit took the opportunity to visit local Islamic centres. The leaders of the mosque were happy and appreciative that officers took the time to show their support and listen to their concerns. Officers also regularly attend the local mosques on Fridays when it's known to be most busy to talk to the community about the importance of reporting crime and how to do so. They also attend sporting events with the youth and do special presentations on topics such as gangs, drugs and bullying.

One factor used to measure impact is whether we receive proactive calls. This is both in the case of reporting instances of concerns and also invitations to community celebrations. When uniformed police are

welcomed into traditional celebrations and those community members are fully engaged, receptive and welcoming, that's how we know we made some inroads. That is the trust piece that leads to an increased comfort in calling police, both in emergency situations but also non-emergency reporting situations.

A/COMMR. CURTIS ZABLOCKI

While everyone can agree that effective and efficient policing is built on a foundation of community engagement, building those relationships can take many forms and can look somewhat different in a rural setting than in a city.

Policing vast, sparsely populated, rural areas like we have in Saskatchewan requires a special kind of community involvement. Because patrols can't be in all places at all times, we are more reliant on our citizens to be the "eyes and ears" of police.

Programs like Rural Crime Watch or Citizens on Patrol are a natural extension of the community spirit that has always existed in rural areas; namely neighbours looking out for neighbours. Those programs emphasize the safety of the volunteers while still providing police with valuable information.

While visibility is an inherent challenge in rural policing, it's also is also a key outreach tool in rural communities. To show up periodically at the coffee shop, or the local rink during a hockey game is a small investment that can pay big dividends. Completing paperwork on our mobile workstations in police vehicles near a busy traffic area, in a school zone or in a problematic area of the community, is another effective and efficient way of reminding people that we are out there.

Regardless of whether the environment is urban or rural, detachment commanders and personnel are focusing their efforts on building relationships to try and address root causes of crime such as mental health issues, substance abuse and poverty. Exploring partnerships leads to the programs and initiatives that can make a difference.

We encourage our communities to put together Community Safety Committees, which are diverse groups of invested, committed partners who can generate new ideas, customize existing ones and integrate them into a strategy to fit their local needs. Together, they can develop a multi-faceted approach to community safety in partnership with the police and other agencies.

To be successful in creating and maintaining safe communities, communities must have both trust and confidence in the police. And that applies to both urban and rural policing alike.

SHERRY BRAY

Since its humble transformation from a highway patrol in 1948, the Kentucky State Police (KSP) has always placed a high value on community policing. Being a rural-based police agency that many citizens rely on, local involvement and interaction became a cornerstone of our mission. Nothing can ever replace the opportunity to talk with citizens in person, but we've been able to use social media networking to engage community members online.

We use different social media platforms to reach a more diverse group of people. We do this in the way we post information, updates, photographs and video to the various social media sites.

For instance, with Facebook, a large number of our followers are over 40. We combine a mixture of news information along with some feel-good stories in those posts. Twitter is where we are reaching a younger crowd of people and our messaging is more on-point and often splashed with trending terminology and memes, which are commonly used on this platform.

Instagram is one of our fastest growing social media sites and we attribute that to the visual message followers are seeing on that page. We strategically use Instagram to show the public a side of our agency they don't often see on the nightly news or in public. This could include a trooper stopping by a child's lemonade stand, visiting a sick child in the hospital or giving blood at a community blood drive. We use limited text on these posts and let the photograph speak for itself.

Facebook tends to be one of our most popular social media sites and we receive a lot of likes, shares and private messages through this platform. We allow our followers to voice their opinions about what we post as long as it isn't derogatory or offensive to others. Many times when someone disagrees with us we have the opportunity to connect with them (via Facebook) and we can resolve a concern they had. Sometimes we have to agree to disagree, but either way we are opening a line of communication that we wouldn't have had without social media.

Our driving purpose behind the use of social media is to disseminate important information to our citizens. We focus heavily on social media to be that outstretched hand when we can't do so in person.

S/SGT. JEFFREY DUGGAN

The Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) is one of North America's largest deployed police services with more than 6,200 uniformed officers and 160 detachments and satellite locations. Many OPP officers are posted in small towns or communities.

Policing in a small town, village or Indigenous community requires a genuine partnership with the people living there. A police officer on duty may be the only officer working in the area with the closest backup being hours away. When working in a small community, the relationships you build are instrumental to your success and could enhance overall officer safety.

My first posting as an OPP officer was in a small Indigenous community. I spent a lot of time both on duty and off duty attending community events. Building relationships with the community made it easier to attend calls. Community members were able to put a face to a name and see past the uniform to work together towards a resolution.

In small communities, calls often come to officers in unconventional ways such as while off duty at the local coffee shop or by a knock on the door at their home at any hour of the day or night. These types of calls often begin with a request for assistance and end with a successful resolution while sharing a cup coffee at your kitchen table. Sometimes what's being reported isn't a crime at all but when the person leaves, they feel better just having spoken to someone.

Often in large city centres, police officers come and go to work without their own neighbours knowing what they do on a daily basis. When you work in a small community, you can't escape the fact that everyone knows what you do for a living. The presence of the cruiser in your driveway is an indicator of your schedule, as is arriving at your child's school or sporting event in uniform.

If you spend the extra time and become part of every facet of the community, you will see the benefits when you attend calls for service. It's also a comfort to know that when it comes to your safety, the community will have your back as you have theirs. ■

FIGHTING FENTANYL

HOW POLICE ARE RESPONDING TO A MASSIVE DRUG CRISIS

By Amelia Thatcher

When fentanyl hit the streets in British Columbia in 2014, mayhem broke loose. Like a disease epidemic, the drug spread through the larger urban centres first — Vancouver, Surrey and Victoria — leaving dozens, then hundreds of overdosed victims in its wake.

Following the trend of most illicit drugs entering the market, fentanyl gained traction in western Canada first. Often prescribed as a painkiller to treat cancer patients, it's now regularly abused as a street drug in all corners of Canada.

"It's really hitting everywhere now," says Sgt. Eric Boechler, an RCMP officer in B.C.'s federal policing unit. "If it's not in a specific community, you'd better be ready for it, because it's coming."

For police officers on the ground responding to the influx of drug-related calls, fentanyl poses a significant safety risk. The synthetic opioid is 100 times stronger than morphine. It can be absorbed easily through the skin or accidentally inhaled by officers confiscating and handling the drug. In its purest form, just two milligrams — equivalent to a few grains of salt — can be deadly.

Although Canada is still in the thick of the fentanyl crisis, the RCMP is working with communities to confront the deadly drug. New police policies, procedures, teams and tools have helped officers across Canada keep communities safer.

GROUND ZERO

For the RCMP in B.C., getting fentanyl training out quickly and effectively was critical for officer safety.

"Gone are the days where a white powder was likely cocaine or a cutting compound," says Boechler. "Now the risk threshold has gone way up, and there could be a threat to officer safety with any unknown white powder."

After several police officers were exposed to the drug in 2016, the RCMP released an awareness video warning first responders and the public about the dangers of fentanyl, and reminding officers to wear personal protective equipment: a respirator, doubled-up nitrile gloves and, if necessary, a hazmat suit to avoid skin contact.

To prepare for the worst-case scenario, the RCMP also released a national mandatory training course for naloxone, an antidote for opioids like fentanyl. More than 13,000 naloxone nasal spray kits were distributed to detachments across Canada and are now carried by on-duty officers in case of accidental exposure, or for first aid treatment on the public.

Another hurdle the RCMP faced was finding a way to identify if they were handling fentanyl, or a less toxic white powder. Common field tests — NIK and NARK kits — are not always accurate at detecting the drug. Boechler says these tests can give a false positive indicator for the presence of other drugs instead of fentanyl, which can lower an officer's risk assessment and put them in danger.

After months of testing, the RCMP is rolling out a new technological solution: ion scanners. The instruments, which are the size of a laptop computer, can perform a trace analysis on scene to determine if an area is contaminated with fentanyl or one of its analogs without having to send a sample to a lab, or call in a police dog.

"This is a big thing coming down the pipe nationally," says Boechler. "To be able to go in with a scientific instrument and tell our officers, 'it's safe' is huge."

RCMP in B.C have already acquired eight of the devices, with more on the way. Other provinces will follow suit in the coming months.

DRUG MAIL

Once officer safety measures were in place, the RCMP had to act fast to target the source of the drug. While fentanyl can be produced in domestic clandestine labs, a large amount comes in shipments from China.

To address this, RCMP in B.C. created Project EPLAN, a provincial strategy targeting packages coming into the mail and cargo centres at the Vancouver airport. At the same time, the RCMP's Federal Policing Criminal Operations headquarters created an official National Synthetic Opioid Strategy with the focus of combatting international trafficking. Investigators are now working with China, the United States and European countries to identify international suppliers and prevent the drugs from entering Canada.

Courtesy of S/Sgt. Ed Stadnik

Members of B.C.'s Clandestine Lab Enforcement and Response team must wear full-body protective equipment when investigating labs that are creating fentanyl.

Sgt. Eric Boetcher

Ion scanners are now being deployed nationwide to help police immediately identify when a person, place or thing is contaminated with fentanyl.

A key part of the RCMP's national opioid strategy is the new Organized Crime Joint Operations Centre (OC-JOC). The centre allows the RCMP to work closely with Canada Post and the Canadian Border Services Agency to keep fentanyl out of Canada.

"We're sharing and exchanging info in real time so that we can identify packages and gather intelligence and enforce this issue," says Sgt. Nini Varkonyi, an RCMP federal policing officer who works in the OC-JOC.

Federal RCMP also work with provincial partners to keep tabs on investigations, drug seizures and overdose deaths relating to fentanyl, and liaise with newly appointed provincial fentanyl co-ordinators.

"We have to get together and talk about this," says Varkonyi. "It's a daunting task — fentanyl is so big and widespread now. Working together is a necessity."

S/Sgt. Ed Stadnik, team commander of B.C.'s EPLAN, says fentanyl presents a new challenge for investigators. The drug comes in much smaller packages than most other illicit drugs, because it's much more concentrated. This has been a game-changer for police, who need to prove the recipient has knowledge of drugs in a package to convict them in court.

"Historically, we've done controlled deliveries where it's easy to prosecute since the amounts of heroin or cocaine were so large — pallets or duffle bags containing pressed bricks of drugs — that it would be obvious when a suspect picked it up," says Stadnik. "With fentanyl, we can't prove they knew what was in the package because it's so nondescript."

To get around this challenge, the RCMP started doing knock-and-talks, where they visit the delivery address of a package and interview the recipients to gain intelligence. Since then, the number of packages coming into Vancouver has drastically declined.

"A lot of sellers don't guarantee delivery to Canada anymore," says Stadnik. "Some of our informants have told us it's becoming harder to get fentanyl into the country."

CROSS-BORDER CONTAMINATION

As the RCMP grappled to contain the fentanyl crisis in B.C., other provinces began seeing the drug spill over their borders.

In response to growing drug trafficking violence and the rise of fentanyl in Grande Prairie, Alta., the local RCMP detachment created a five-person specialized drug unit. The team takes on in-depth drug investigations, homing in on fentanyl dealers and suppliers in the community.

Cpl. Eldon Chillog, the unit's supervisor, says his team has already made an impact. On a recent drug bust, they seized more than 2,000 fentanyl pills.

"We're seeing fewer people supplying and selling it because of our enforcement," says Chillog. "They know this unit will target them, so they've either stopped being involved with fentanyl entirely or have begun supplying coloured heroin instead."

On top of running investigations, the team gives presentations to nearby communities, providing awareness and warning the public about the dangers of fentanyl.

Cpl. Scott Hanson, a member of Manitoba's Clandestine Laboratory Enforcement and Response (CLEAR) team, also sees the value in working closely with communities. Shortly after fentanyl appeared, Manitoba Justice created a fentanyl task force involving health agencies, social services and law enforcement, including the RCMP.

"We're trying to slow the demand and shut off the supply — socially and through enforcement," he says. "Working together is a lot easier when you're at the same table, we can trade information back and forth now."

Hanson has watched the drug spread from major cities like Winnipeg out to the rural areas. To keep people safe, RCMP in Manitoba created an aggressive media campaign to educate the public. Hanson says their goal is to give people information so they can make smart decisions, rather than scaring them.

MOVING EAST

With their eyes on the west coast, eastern Canada began buckling down in 2014. To date, most of the RCMP's work in Newfoundland, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island has been proactive preparations: training members and ordering supplies and resources. They're just now seeing more cases trickle into their jurisdictions.

On top of ensuring officers are properly trained, S/Sgt. Steve Conohan, an officer on Newfoundland RCMP's CLEAR team, is encouraging all detachments — urban and rural — to purchase additional personal protective equipment for front-line officers. The provincial CLEAR team also rolled out printable wallet cards for employees, outlining how to handle hazardous substances such as fentanyl.

"We're teaching our officers the steps to follow, A through Z," says Conohan. "The consistent message we're sending to our front-line officers is that we care that you go home at the end of your shift."

This year, Newfoundland RCMP also sent 20 employees from operations, intelligence, crime analysis and drug prevention to B.C. to be embedded in teams that are facing the brunt of the issue.

"We got to see how they did things and handled the day to day. They're the subject matter experts who've been dealing with this," says Conohan, who is sharing what he learned with his eastern colleagues. "We want to have a standardized approach for all our members across the country." ■

SURREY HOT SPOT GETTING SAFER

OUTREACH TEAM ENGAGES AT-RISK COMMUNITY

By Amelia Thatcher

After years of building up a notorious reputation as a hub for criminal activity, Surrey's 135A Street began spiraling out of control in August 2016. The fentanyl crisis had hit.

Overdoses were at an all-time high and increasing reports of violence meant Surrey RCMP officers were being called to the neighbourhood several times a day.

"We couldn't just turn a blind eye to what was going on down there," says Sgt. Trevor Dinwoodie, a Surrey RCMP officer. "We realized we needed to make a concentrated effort to deal with homelessness, addiction and the marginalized people who live on 135A. So that's what we did."

Last December, the City of Surrey partnered with the RCMP to create the Surrey Outreach Team, a three-year pilot project dedicated to improving the 135A Street area and helping the people who live there. The team includes 12 RCMP officers who patrol the area 24-7, four bylaw officers who work with police during the day, and several community providers from the health, housing and social services sectors.

"We complement each other," says Martin Blais, a Surrey bylaw officer. "If we need them or they need us, we're there for each other. Our primary goal is to keep the people on 135A safe."

WORKING TOGETHER

The outreach team works out of a command centre in a portable building on 135A Street. The small office provides a place for RCMP and bylaw officers to meet with community partners such as Emergency Health Services, Fraser Health, the Lookout Society and Surrey Mission shelters. Each morning, they discuss how many beds are available, who's using what resources, and what the priorities are for that day.

While enforcement is part of their mandate, the Surrey Outreach Team focuses on building relationships with vulnerable groups and directing them to resources.

"We work with those entrenched in street life, whether that's helping them get ID or aligning them with social services they haven't used yet. You name it, we do it," says Dinwoodie. "Our primary focus is to make a difference in these peoples' lives rather than locking them up for being addicted to drugs."

CHECKING IN

Police and bylaw officers are the first boots on the ground every morning. One of the team's major jobs is to make sure no overdoses go unnoticed.

"We do a welfare check, going from tent to tent, knocking and making sure everything is okay," says Cst. Ryan Tobin, a member of the team. "If we don't get a response, we'll check out the situation."

During one of these welfare checks a few weeks ago, a new police officer came across a homeless man who was unconscious. He called Tobin over, and the pair slashed through the thin nylon side of the tent to remove the man, who had no vital signs. He had overdosed on fentanyl.

Tobin radioed in his paramedic partners, who rushed the man to a hospital where he was put on a ventilator. He made it, but barely.

"It was a great catch because he would've been dead if we waited a couple more minutes," says Tobin.

MAKING A DIFFERENCE

This year, from January to May 2017, there were 713 drug overdoses in Surrey, 69 of which were fatal.

Although the majority of overdoses occurred in the 135A area, only five of the overdose deaths happened there.

"The frequency and amount of violence has significantly declined now that we're here," says Dinwoodie. "As a police officer, you can tell when there's hate in the air. Now we don't feel that or see that as much on 135A."

Since the Surrey Outreach Team became operational, calls for service in the 135A area have decreased by 14 per cent. To date, they've successfully re-routed more than 80 people off the streets to housing and services such as addictions counselling and mental health assistance.

Tobin credits much of the team's success to their talk-first, arrest-later attitude.

"We get to know people personally without just rolling up in a police car, solving the issue and driving away," says Tobin. "We know their names and they know our names. It's like we're the sheriffs in this Wild West area and residents know that we'll follow-up on issues." ▪

Surrey RCMP and bylaw officers work together with community partners to help the homeless, addicted and vulnerable populations in the 135A area.

Jazz Nijjar, Surrey Bylaw

Sgt. Neal Fraser, RCMP

One benefit of policing in an urban centre is having numerous police services available, like this dog team in Grand Prairie, Alta.

BUILD PARTNERSHIPS, BE PART OF COMMUNITY

DETACHMENT COMMANDERS TALK ABOUT KEY SKILLS, TOP PRIORITIES

THE DETACHMENT COMMANDERS

URBAN

- **Supt. Deanne Burleigh, Upper Fraser Valley Regional detachment (includes five communities with a population ~100,000), Chilliwack, B.C.**
- **Supt. Don McKenna, Grand Prairie and Beaverlodge detachment (population 95,000), Grande Prairie, Alta.**

RURAL

- **Sgt. Brian Auger, Nelson House detachment (population ~2,800), Nelson House, Man.**
- **Sgt. Peter Stubbs, St. Stephen detachment (includes three communities with a population ~15,000), St. Stephen, N.B.**

At first glance, policing a rural community or an urban centre would seem as different as the landscapes themselves. But when you dig a little deeper, no matter the size of the community, there are many similarities. Deidre Seiden asked four RCMP detachment commanders what it's like working in their communities, from the skills needed to do the job to how their experience helps them run their detachments.

WHAT SKILLS AND ABILITIES ARE NECESSARY FOR YOUR POLICE OFFICERS TO HAVE?

Brian Auger: I just finished 35 years of service. I've found over the years, and I spent more than 30 years working on First Nations because I'm a First Nation member, I find to benefit a community is to be part of the community. We all have a different style, whether it's sense of humour or whatever it may be, it really opens the door. What I've found is we do have the time to acknowledge people, shake their hands and say "hi." The people in small communities that we police, they know who we are.

Peter Stubbs: In my setting, I would agree with Brian, that it's important to become a part of the community. In addition to that, being able to positively have those interactions with the community. Recently we had a member out on patrol stop and play basketball with some kids. A lady from across the street recorded it on her cellphone. The next thing you know, I'm getting calls from across the country wanting to know who this officer is. The little things like that make a big impact.

There are four border crossings within my detachment area. One of my detachments, in order to get to it, you have to drive 45 minutes through the States nine months a year. Your only backup when you're over there may be Fisheries and Oceans Canada or CBSA [Canada Border Services Agency], so you build those relationships and, at times, they become your backup.

Deanne Burleigh: The communication and community engagement are absolutely key. In addition to that, another skillset that's key here is officer presence and officer safety. We have weapons and drugs everywhere. The members have to know how to handle the drugs on the street and be very careful when

they're handling them.

The skillsets are: flexibility, the ability to move from one call to the other very quickly, and good writing skills because there's a large number of reports to Crown counsel that are submitted. And of course last year we had an unfortunate year, we had seven murders in Chilliwack, so many of our members learned crime-scene management.

WHAT ARE THE TOP PRIORITIES AT YOUR DETACHMENT?

DB: My number one priority right now is homelessness and vagrancy. We went from a homeless count of under 100 in 2014 to almost 300 in 2017. We're taking a co-ordinated approach. We're very visible. We're out on foot doing patrols multiple times a day. We co-ordinate it with our local partners including a mental health nurse. Drugs, addiction and mental health are close behind as priorities.

PS: We don't have many homeless people in St. Stephen. It's so different being in a small rural setting. Our priorities are different as well. One of our major priorities is substance abuse. There used to be months where we wouldn't execute a search warrant. We're executing two to three a month now. It may not seem significant, but for us it is.

Traffic would probably be our next biggest priority in terms of what the communities are looking for from us. In the month of April, we did a distracted driving operation. We ended up charging 32 drivers that month. To put that into perspective, the entire province with more than 500 members wrote an average of 76 per month in 2016.

BA: We have a violent community. The [domestic] violence is usually alcohol related.

We're going after the next generation — the students — and their own relationships. Have we been successful? Maybe to some degree, but we still get about a half dozen domestics per week. It's the struggle that we're dealing with and we will continue to deal with as the years go on.

Don McKenna: We deal with drug addiction as well. For the last two years we were number one in the crime severity index for cities over 50,000 for violent crime and crime. We've really knocked that down. To do so, we looked around at what other detachments were doing. At that time, we were an average of 115 police officers to a population of 100,000. The national average is 194 to 100,000 and the divisional average was 170. We had a lot of junior members and our watches were also very short.

In the fall of 2015, I presented to the city council and advised them that we are going to be number one on everything (referencing the Crime Severity Index). I think at that time we had seven homicides, and of course all the drug-related crime. I said we need a drug section and we need a crime reduction unit.

The community is very supportive of the police and we got those resources, plus another four members every year. We've used those to full advantage so crime is way, way down. I think we'll still be in the top 10, but I hope that we'll be down to number six or so on the index.

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF URBAN AND RURAL POLICING?

DB: The biggest benefit in urban policing is backup is right there. You're not alone. We also have the technology, equipment and the labs. We have support services from municipal police departments nearby. We have the integrated dog team, the integrated homicide team and the forensic ident team. We have all of those services that are basically at our fingertips.

PS: I've worked both and one of the benefits that I see in the rural areas is that members get to hold on to their files and investigate them all the way through to completion. You get that really good, solid investigational experience because you don't have anyone to pass it off to.

DM: Well, for urban centres you have a little bit of anonymity. In a city of 70,000 people, your days off can be unencumbered. You don't get that in a small town. I love small-town policing, but you're always going to be recognized.

ON THE FLIP SIDE, WHAT ARE THE MAIN CHALLENGES THAT YOU FACE?

DB: Resourcing.

PS: One hundred per cent.

DM: Human resources are always the most challenging issues. We have to make sure

Courtesy of Sgt. Peter Stubbs, RCMP

Sgt. Peter Stubbs, right, performs a traffic stop in St. Stephen's, N.B., with members of his detachment.

that members have enough support.

PS: I'm sure this is across the country but soft vacancies, like parental leave, off-duty sick, injury, are having a dramatic negative impact on our detachment. You run short. That's probably my biggest challenge right now.

BA: That's a problem across the country. When you're short two or three members, the pressure is on the other members to step up. And the majority of them do, but you also notice the burnout. I try to give them time off to get away. In a community like this one, if they want to travel to Winnipeg, they need a few days. Just being able to give them that extra time to get away.

It's nice to know the membership is stepping up and coming to the plate to cover shifts, albeit on double overtime, that's just the nature of the beast.

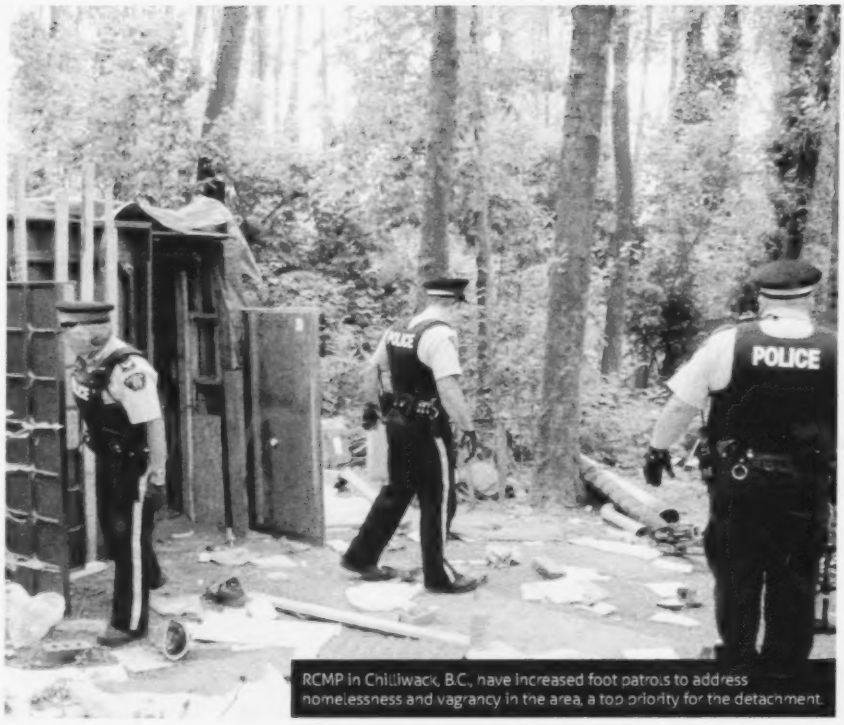
HOW DO YOU SUPPORT YOUR MEMBERS?

PS: I do everything I can to support my members, especially in terms of work-life balance and mental health. We've added some equipment to the gym here and we've created some standards. For example, if a member's files are up to date and there are at least two members on the road, they can go down and do their workout on shift.

As a sergeant, I push up the concerns and I have no aversion to speaking openly with upper management to the struggles we are facing. But my job is also to try and come up with solutions to present to upper management on behalf of my members.

DB: What we're doing in the lower mainland is we have a minimum number of cars on the road. So if members fall ill or we have soft vacancies, we're calling in on overtime to meet our minimums so they are feeling safe on the road and they're not being burnt out. And I do small things like award ceremonies, recognition and detachment barbecues. Those types of things seem to go a long way.

DM: One of our jobs is to show the members that have a great organization. We have a wonderful history in the RCMP, which I like to leverage. We hadn't had a mess dinner for years before I came here. So we just had a mess dinner. And last year, we had a dining in and had Gavin Crawford from *This Hour Has 22 Minutes* come out as our guest speaker. All of those things lets us celebrate the great traditions in the RCMP.



RCMP

RCMP in Chilliwack, B.C., have increased foot patrols to address homelessness and vagrancy in the area, a top priority for the detachment.

HOW HAS YOUR EXPERIENCE SHAPED HOW YOU RUN YOUR DETACHMENT?

PS: I take an interest in my people and their development. It creates a huge amount of buy in. For me as I've grown in the RCMP, that was something I learned from my good bosses. They took an interest in me and that made me work harder. I do my best to take an interest in all my members and their development and where they want to go.

DB: It's not just knowing the members, but knowing what's going on with the members. I've always said I could spend all day long going around and talking to members and not get any of my work done. But in the long run, I actually gain more and do get work done by doing that. So I make it a point when I have members off sick to get in touch with them. If I have members struggling with their development, I meet with them personally. I sit on all the cadet panels personally, support as much training as I can and get the equipment they ask for.

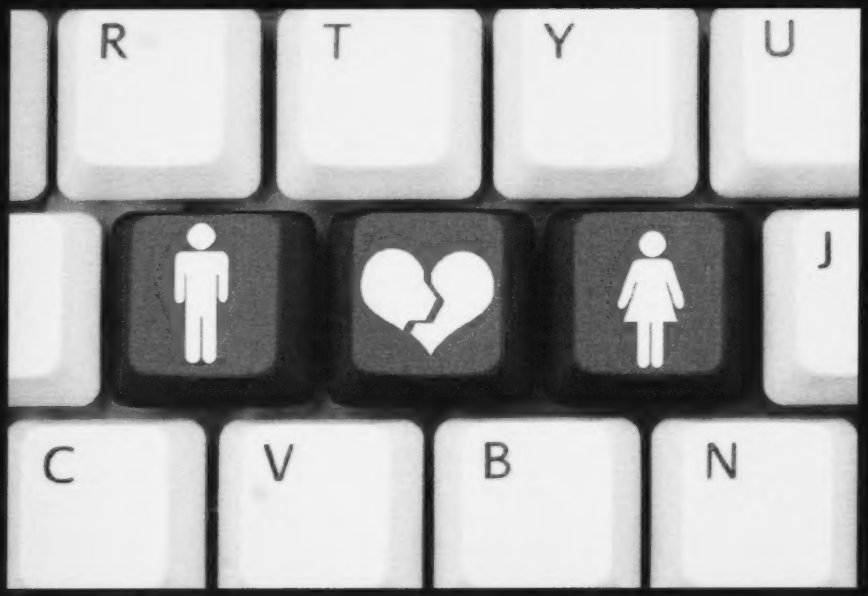
BA: I want to engage my members. I have had young cadets come here. They get bored [at home]. They go home and wait for their next shift. I tell them to take the skidoo or the quad out. I tell them not to injure themselves, but to enjoy it and learn. One day they might have to run down that trail. I will continue to do that if I get another cadet and if they're bored. It puts the liability on me, but I don't expect them to harm themselves. They will go out there and learn what they need to.

DM: I would agree with Brian about risk and risk aversion. For things like the snowmobile, that is a real, calculated risk that you can take; members really do appreciate that. Every time they answer a call, they're taking risks. For us as administrators, we just have to manage the risk.

I've also learned we can never admonish people publicly. When somebody makes a mistake, it's a learning opportunity. Sometimes there has to be some kind of discipline, but we don't have to beat people up or hold it over their head. If somebody makes a mistake, if possible, let them fix it and then talk to them about it. In my 28 years, what have I learned the most from? I've learned the most from screwing up, not from doing it right the first time. ■

just THE FACTS

ROMANCE SCAMS



Dating websites can be a hunting ground for scammers, who create fake online profiles in hopes of wooing unsuspecting victims. Those who fall for romance scams are often conned out of thousands of dollars — only to find out their love is a lie. This fast-growing type of fraud has increased as dating websites have gained traction, threatening romance seekers worldwide.

Romance scams happen when fraudsters use fake online profiles with stolen photos to lure potential victims into relationships on dating websites or on social media sites. After building trust, the scammers eventually ask for money or bank info, according to the Canadian Anti-Fraud Centre (CAFC).

In most cases, fraudsters live in other countries. They ask for money to help cover travel costs to see their new lover (but never arrive), or will use stories of fake tragedies, medical problems or other hardships to solicit money, according to the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI).

To gain the trust and affection of victims, scammers will often send gifts, flowers and tokens of love to prove their intentions are genuine. Typically, the higher the trust level, the more money lost by the victim, according to the RCMP.

Some of these fake relationships can last years, costing victims anywhere from a few hundred dollars to hundreds of thousands. In one case, a Toronto woman lost more than $450,000 over the course of seven years. The case is now being investigated by the Toronto Police Service.

In 2016, more than 750 people across Canada lost more than $17 million to scammers. That works out to about $23,000 lost per victim, according to the RCMP.

Romance scams are the highest grossing scams compared to other Internet frauds according to the CAFC's 2016 statistics. Wire fraud (fraudulent email requests) and identity theft placed second and third respectively for dollar loss by Canadians.

Despite being first place for dollars lost, romance scams placed 16th for the number of complaints the CAFC received in Canada — 1,146 complaints and 774 victims in 2016.

According to data from the CAFC, the amount of money lost in romance scams has increased over the last five years — from $12 million in 2011, to $17 million in 2016.

Reported instances of romance fraud are probably much lower than actual numbers because many victims never report the crime or tell their loved ones due to shame, fear of ridicule and denial.

Most dating fraud originates in Nigeria and Ghana, as well as in Malaysia and England, which have large West African communities, according to the FBI.

Online scammers usually prey on older, emotionally vulnerable single people. Most victims of dating scams are those in their 40s and 50s, according to the RCMP.

In 2015, the FBI received 9,890 complaints from victims 40 to 60, while just 2,373 complaints were from victims 39 and under.

Data from the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission's Scamwatch indicates that men and women are equally likely to be victims of romance scams.

However, Scamwatch's reports show that Australian women lost more money per scam — almost $12,000 on average, compared to an average loss of $7,000 reported by their male counterparts.

If you believe you've been a victim of a romance scam, the RCMP recommends you contact your bank and place a stop payment on any cheque or money transfer, report it to your local police and file a report with the CAFC.

— Compiled by Amelia Thatcher

TRADING BLUE FOR RED

PROGRAM BRINGS EXPERIENCE TO THE RCMP

By Deidre Seiden

As an experienced police officer, RCMP Cst. Eliot Hill brings a unique perspective to the RCMP where he has worked for just over a year.

Before he started general-duty policing in the Codiac region in New Brunswick, Hill worked for the Toronto Police Service Emergency Task Force, the equivalent of the RCMP's Emergency Response Team, for more than a decade.

"It's not just the experience I bring, it's valuable to have an outside opinion," says Hill. "The young guys on my shift often ask how something compares to Toronto. I can reinforce that this is a good spot to be."

RCMP

Cst. Natasha Couture, alongside her experienced police officer troopmates, had almost 12 years of experience with another police service when she joined the RCMP.

EXPERIENCED RECRUITS

Hill joined the RCMP through the Experienced Police Officer Program. Since 2000, 457 police officers have traded their former police uniforms for the iconic red serge.

The program is specific to the entry of members from other Canadian police agencies or Canadian Forces Military Police trained after the year 2000.

Experienced police officers from outside of Canada have to apply through the regular recruiting process as long as they're a Canadian citizen or a permanent resident who has lived in Canada for 10 consecutive years.

Experienced police applicants must have two years of experience and have graduated from a Canadian police training institution to qualify.

Typically, one troop of 12 to 32 experienced Canadian police officers receives five weeks of training at Depot, the RCMP's training academy, each year.

The journey to get to Depot can be long, says Sgt. Chris Smigelsky, who's in charge of National Recruiting Program Policy and Process. "We have so many applicants coming through that it takes time," says Smigelsky.

The process is a bit different than the Cadet Training Program: lateral applicants apply directly to the province (RCMP division) where they want to work, through recruiters.

Smigelsky gives divisional staffing three months to review all the applicants and select who they want to hire. After that, applicants have to complete various stages of the recruiting process to determine if they meet the high standards of the RCMP, which takes about a year.

During that year, they must successfully complete the Physical Abilities Requirement Evaluation (PARE), a polygraph interview and examination, a field investigation and security clearance as well as a health assessment.

"It's quite the process," says Hill. "I think I was assisted by the fact that I had done a secondment with the RCMP ERT. I knew a lot of people that could clarify the process for me, which reassured me."

150 REASONS TO JOIN

Every lateral hire has his or her own reason for joining. Hill's motivation was to find work-life balance.

"I probably had the best job in policing in Canada," says Hill. "But my kids wouldn't care what was on my resumé 20 years from now. My personal life was basically spent commuting and recovering from my commute. That's one of the main reasons that brought us here."

The most common reason that experienced police officers are drawn to the RCMP is for the opportunities.

"A lot of laterals come over because we have 150 different things we can do in the force as a constable," says Smigelsky. "You can work overseas, do a United Nations mission, be a dog handler, a diver — there are so many different things that smaller departments don't have."

Opportunity is the exact reason Cst. Natasha Couture made the switch.

"My previous department was always good to me," says Couture. "They're a good employer and I was fortunate to receive a lot of training with them, but there are only so many places you can go in a small department. The RCMP has so many opportunities open to us. I think that was a common denominator among my troopmates."

Couture says that she was impressed with the combined expertise of her troop. "We brought different components to our team," says Couture. "We would have been interesting to have all 13 members in one detachment. We would've been a highly-skilled team."

Smigelsky says this is one of the biggest benefits of the program.

"Not only can we get these members faster to the field as there is only five weeks of training versus 26 at Depot, we benefit from their experience and even expertise," says Smigelsky. "They bring that across and we benefit from that experience right away." ■

FINDING A ROADSIDE DRUG TEST

USING SALIVA SAMPLES TO CONVICT HIGH DRIVERS

By Amelia Thatcher

Police agencies in Canada have found a new way to test drug-impaired drivers — using saliva. In a pilot project run earlier this year, the RCMP and other Canadian police agencies in collaboration with Public Safety Canada tested two different oral fluid screening devices, which can identify the presence of drugs using a mouth swab.

The study comes as police forces across the country are preparing for the anticipated legalization of marijuana on July 1, 2018.

"Drug impaired driving is increasing steadily, and we can only speculate that if cannabis [marijuana] becomes legalized, this will increase further," says Sgt. Ray Moos, an officer from the RCMP's National Traffic Services who is co-ordinating the project. "We're planning on being prepared either way."

Much like a breathalyser test for alcohol impairment, an oral fluid drug screening device is a small, portable machine that police can use to test drivers for impairment at roadside blocks and random stops. There's currently no device for police officers to detect drug-impaired driving in Canada, making an oral fluids screening device a potential first.

THE PILOT

Even though drug detecting devices are used in other countries such as Australia and the United Kingdom with success, Canadian researchers wanted to make sure the devices would be durable enough to work in our variable, often cold climate, within Canadian law enforcement practices.

Seven police agencies from big, small, urban and rural areas were involved in the pilot project which took place between December 2016 and March 2017, including RCMP in North Battleford, Sask., and Yellowknife, N.W.T.

In total, 53 officers across the country were trained to use the devices, and they collected approximately 1,000 samples from volunteers in more than 25 communities in all types of weather, temperatures and times of day. The samples were safely disposed of after the tests.

The two devices tested in the pilot can identify six of the most commonly abused drugs: cannabis, amphetamines, methamphetamines, cocaine, opiates and benzodiazepines. Cannabis was the most commonly found drug in the study, accounting for 61 per cent of all positive tests.

"Those few drugs make up a large proportion of our impaired driving numbers, so being able to test them immediately rather than call in a Drug Recognition Expert would be useful," says D'Arcy Smith, a toxicologist who works in National Traffic Services. "It allows us to make better use of our resources."

The RCMP currently uses police officers trained in the Standard Field Sobriety Test (SFST) and the Drug Recognition Expert (DRE) program to detect impaired drivers. With approximately 1,000 SFST-trained officers and 500 DREs in the force — about 10 per cent of all RCMP officers — it can be a challenge to have an expert attend every roadside stop.

"In my experience, Drug Recognition Experts aren't always available when dealing with a suspected drug-impaired driver," says Cst. Tyler Dunphy, a Yellowknife RCMP officer who participated in the pilot. "Having a roadside screening device will increase the number of officers who are able to identify drug impaired driving and will ultimately hold more drivers accountable for their actions."

Overall, the results from the pilot project showed that with the proper training, oral fluid screening devices can be a useful additional tool for police to detect people driving under the influence of drugs.

NEXT STEPS

While the devices can effectively detect the presence of a drug, Smith notes this does not always relate directly to the impairment of an individual. Alcohol has a strict per se limit of 80 milligrams per 100 millilitres of blood — a blood alcohol concentration put into the *Criminal Code* at which it becomes illegal to drive. Drugs do not currently have legislated per se limits.

"We're talking about thousands of drugs," says Smith. "We don't have the same body of research on drug impairment, so it's difficult to pick number for a limit. It also depends on the individual tolerance of the person and how they react to specific drugs."

Despite these challenges, police are not backing down on enforcing drug impaired driving. The pilot is now being used to develop training, guidelines and standards for the devices. If all goes as planned, the RCMP will roll out the oral fluid screening devices before next summer.

"It's one more tool that we're putting into our front-line officers' tool belt to deal with impaired drivers on our roads," says Smith. ■

Oral fluid screening devices can be used roadside to detect the presence of drugs in a driver's saliva.

Serge Gouin

IDENTIFYING IMPAIRMENT

HOW POLICE CAN TELL IF YOU'RE DRIVING HIGH

From prescription painkillers to cocaine and marijuana, Drug Recognition Experts (DREs) are trained to identify and convict impaired drivers. Cpl. David Botham has been a DRE with the RCMP since 2010, and has trained more than 200 police officers to recognize the signs of impairment. He sat down with Amelia Thatcher to talk about how drugs impair people, and what signs to look for.

Maxime Cremer

Drug Recognition Experts use a variety of tests to identify impairment, many of which involve the eyes: testing pupil size and tracking how the eyes move.

HOW CAN YOU TELL IF SOMEONE IS IMPAIRED?

Pretty much everybody is familiar with alcohol and what it does to you — it slows you down and reduces your inhibitions. With drugs, they all have some sort of mental effect, but physically they do different things. The crux of the DRE program is based on seven categories of drugs, and each group has certain characteristics or symptoms. For example, blood pressure, pulse rate and pupil sizes can all change depending on the drug. Alcohol falls under one of these categories (it's a central nervous system depressant) but it's treated separately from drugs.

WHAT SIGNS DO YOU LOOK FOR?

We follow the standards set out by the International Association of Chiefs of Police and the Drug Recognition Evaluation, which is a standardized and systematic 12-step process. As part of that, we do numerous tests on the eyes — the eyes provide us with the most information. First, you make sure the pupils are the same size, because if one is bigger, it may be a medical emergency. Then we test the eyes' ability to track a stimulus. Alcohol will make your eyes jerk when they're following a stimulus from side-to-side, rather than moving smoothly. Lack of convergence or inability to cross your eyes is also an indicator — certain drugs won't let your eyes cross.

We also do divided attention tests where we give the suspect a set of instructions and see how well they perform. There's a walk-and-turn test, one-leg-stand test, modified Romberg balance test and finger-to-nose test. The totality of those tests shows impairment, if they can't perform them well then they probably shouldn't be driving.

We also check if their vital signs are in the normal ranges — pulse rate and blood pressure. This can be a major clue as to what category of drug they're on. Then we look at the body and do a muscle tone examination. Certain categories of drugs make your muscles do funny things. With narcotic analgesics [painkillers] your muscles will be very flaccid, almost like a bag of milk. With stimulants, you're going to be very rigid and tense. We also look for injection sites.

We'll then interview the suspect to see what they have to say. They're under no obligation to say anything, but a lot of the time we can have very candid conversations about what drugs they've taken.

Finally, if we believe a person is impaired at the end of the evaluation, we ask for a urine, blood or other fluid sample for the lab.

WHAT DO YOU COME ACROSS THE MOST?

Cannabis is probably the most popular across the country — in Nova Scotia for sure — followed by stimulants [cocaine, methamphetamine] and narcotic analgesics [painkillers]. We come across just about every category of drug, but a lot of it is regionalized. Rural Newfoundland was surprisingly more opiates, while Halifax was more stimulants like cocaine. It depends on the drug trends in the area.

WHERE ARE DRUGS THE BIGGEST ISSUE?

It's both urban and rural. Having now worked in my fourth division [province], I've learned that there's drugs and alcohol in every community. Prescription drugs are also huge, there might be no intent, but somebody could be impaired by what a doctor prescribes them, and they can still be charged.

WHAT WOULD YOU SAY TO OTHER POLICE OFFICERS?

Be aware of what isn't normal. There was one instance where I drove past a guy I knew and waved, but he didn't wave back. He always waved at me so I drove back and checked it out. It turned out he was driving drunk. Drugs and alcohol influence behaviour, so if someone is acting out of the ordinary from what you expect, look into it a bit more because you don't know what the cause could be. ■

Liann Parker, RCMP

Researchers found that two personality traits — conscientiousness and extroversion — were associated with the favourable profile of a police interviewer.

PROFILE OF A GOOD POLICE INTERVIEWER

PERSONALITY AND COMPETENCIES PLAY ROLE

By RCMP Cpl. Michel Funicelli, PhD candidate experimental psychology, and Prof. Jean-Roch Laurence, Psychology Department, Concordia University

Interviewing suspects is a crucial tool for police forces and the prosecution. Sometimes it's the only investigative avenue available to law enforcement personnel faced with solving a case in which forensic evidence is lacking, no longer exists or has been destroyed.

According to Justice Edson Haines of the Ontario Supreme Court in 1972, such cases are not uncommon: "In many circumstances, physical clues are entirely absent. The only approach to a possible solution is the interrogation of the suspect and others who may possess useful information."

Field research corroborates Justice Haines' statement. In 1980, researchers reported that forensic evidence was either unavailable or not important in 95 per cent of cases in England, while other researchers concluded in 1996 that forensic clues were gathered in only 10 per cent of offences investigated by police in the United States.

In light of the importance of potential evidence resulting from a police interview, and from a personnel selection standpoint, identifying the characteristics of competent and suitable interviewers can only benefit the general interview performance of investigative units, the crime solving rates of police services and the public's trust.

The idea behind this research was to identify the profile of a person best suited to conduct police interviews. Three measures were used to develop this profile: a personality inventory, a competency measuring tool and a communicative suspiciousness questionnaire.

PERSONALITY

The personality inventory measured five broad domain traits:

1. *Openness.* This trait refers to the creativity and artistic sensitivity aspects of an individual. High scorers tend to be original and unconventional, while low scorers are plain and uncomplicated.

2. *Conscientiousness.* This characteristic points to industriousness and devotion. Persons with high scores are attentive and hard-working, and those with low scores are neglectful and lazy.

3. *Extraversion-introversion spectrum.* This trait depicts characteristics along an external reality versus inner feelings axis. It corresponds to those who are open and exuberant at one end of the spectrum, and those who are reserved and timid at the other end.

4. *Agreeableness.* This element features concepts of humanity and compassion. Persons at the high end are inclined to be obliging and genuine, and others at the low end are contentious and harmful.

5. *Neuroticism.* This factor represents the emotional stability of an individual. High scorers are distraught and tormented, and low scorers are calm and tranquil.

COMPETENCY

The competency instrument measured five dimensions:

1. *Careful-tenacious.* Individuals who are methodical, attentive to detail and able to carry on a constant effort.

2. *Controlled-non-reactive.* An individual's ability to withstand pressure

and the corresponding non-reactivity towards stressful situations.

3. *Dominant-insisting.* A coercive style where the interviewer presses the interviewee for answers.

4. *Communicative.* The characteristics associated with good interpersonal and communication skills.

5. *Benevolent.* The kind-hearted attributes of an individual.

SUSPICIOUSNESS

Lastly, the suspiciousness tool evaluated the suspicion level of a sample of police interviewers. An overly suspicious interrogator might misinterpret a suspect's inoffensive statement for an attempt at deception, which might lead him or her to aggressively pursue a line of questioning down a path to nowhere. On the other hand, a dupable interviewer could easily accept a suspect's alibi or version of events and discontinue a meticulous examination of all the facts at the risk of overlooking crucial evidence.

An invitation was sent to the chiefs of 22 major police departments in Canada. A total of 47 serving police officers (40 men, seven women) from across Canada who were in a position of conducting interviews of suspects involved in major crimes, responded and completed all three questionnaires.

The second portion of the research asked the participants to classify, over a six-month period, the conclusion of their interviews in any of four possible outcomes: the suspect denied any allegation, the suspect admitted to some incriminating facts, the suspect confessed, or the interviewer cleared the suspect as innocent. A fifth possible outcome, the suspect remained silent throughout the interview, was not retained for the purposes of this research. The police participants collected data from 162 interviews.

The data generated from these participants and interviews was put through a series of statistical analyses and provided the basis for the following conclusions.

FINDINGS

Other than being the first of its kind, this research led to some notable findings.

First, the competency instrument, which was initially developed on a population of Dutch police officers and later validated on a similar sample in Belgium, was also shown to be applicable to a Canadian population across cultural and linguistic lines.

Second, the results obtained from the personality inventory with a Canadian sample were in line with other European researchers, indicating its reliability.

Third, the communicative suspiciousness tool had never been related to the other two measuring instruments before. The findings showed that the level of suspiciousness was negatively related to the communication competency and the conscientiousness and extraversion personality dimensions. In other words, the greater the level of communicative suspicion on the interviewer's part, the less conscientious and extroverted he or she turned out to be. Both dimensions play an important role in several interviewing skills. This combination may be an unfavourable profile for interviewers wishing to establish a rapport with interviewees.

Overall, in the current sample, the more suspicious interviewers appeared to be, the less competent they were in their communicative skill set, and perhaps not as conscientious in attending to appropriate cues. Negligent and disorganized interviewers with poor communication skills are more likely to interpret communication messages as generally suspicious and label them deceptive.

Fourth, those scoring high in the careful-tenacious dimensions were also more conscientious and less emotionally volatile. In terms of interviewing ability, these individuals would represent some of the best candidates. These individuals are methodical, attentive to detail, industrious and composed.

Fifth, in terms of the controlled-non-reactive competency dimension and the personality traits of conscientiousness, agreeableness and neuroticism, this combination of characteristics also represents a desirable interview profile for a police investigator. High scorers in this competency would be able to withstand pressure in dealing with difficult interviewees, be more perseverant, reliable, patient, cordial and even-tempered.

SUMMARY

Establishing and maintaining a positive rapport is a central component to a successful interview. An ideal personality and competency profile of a police interviewer may not exist yet, but police agencies could be mindful of the developing research in the selection of their personnel in investigative units. Further replications are warranted before stronger conclusions can be reached and recommendations made.

Nonetheless, the data obtained from the interrogation outcomes permits some tentative conclusions. A statistical analysis revealed that 24 per cent of the variability in the outcome of the 162 interviews collected was accounted for by certain personality traits, competency characteristics and degrees of suspiciousness.

A statistical analysis revealed that 24 per cent of the variance in the outcome of an interview was accounted for by two of an interviewer's personality traits — conscientiousness and extroversion — as well as his or her degree of suspiciousness, and how careful and tenacious he or she was during the interview.

This means that 24 per cent of an interview outcome can be attributed to certain personality traits and competency characteristics, while the remaining value (76 per cent) can be explained by other factors such as the profile of the suspect, peculiarities or different aspects of the crime itself, the quality and quantity of the evidence, and measurement error.

Considering that nearly a quarter of what transpires during an interview is associated with the profile of an interviewer, it would be important to select the right person for the right kind of interview, taking into account the suspect and the crime.

This experiment is only the beginning of what will hopefully evolve into a matrix where the profile of a police interviewer can be matched to that of a suspect. Many more experiments of this type will need to be conducted to accumulate enough data before this matrix becomes a useful tool in finding the most efficient match between interviewer and suspect. ■

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GLOBAL POLICE AMBASSADORS

OFFICERS UNITE TO BUILD POLICE STATION IN UGANDA

By Amelia Thatcher

A moment of inspiration drove RCMP Cst. Kirsten Link to spearhead a fundraising mission to build a police station halfway around the world in Uganda earlier this year.

"I wanted to do a little more in my life," says Link, who currently works in the Serious and Organized Crime unit in Newmarket, Ont. "I've always enjoyed doing charity work within Canada and was looking for an opportunity to do some humanitarian work abroad."

Link had attended fundraising events run by one of the RCMP's Health Services physicians, Dr. Linda Douville, and contacted her in 2016 asking how she could help. She never imagined she'd end up in Uganda just over a year later.

A POLICE PROJECT

Shortly after reaching out to Douville, Link connected with a man named Don McLaughlin, a retired Toronto police officer who now runs High Adventure Charities. The veteran cop worked for the Toronto Police Service for 29 years before retiring in 2000, when he took over managing the charity.

High Adventure raises money for a variety of community-based projects in Africa. They take on everything from building radio broadcasting stations to humanitarian projects, such as building a health centre in Ongutoi, Uganda.

Since his first trip to Uganda, McLaughlin has been acutely aware of the lack of resources and services for local police. He's kept an eye out for police-related projects his charity could take on, and the new health centre provided the first opportunity.

After the centre was built, the Ugandan government assigned two police officers to watch over the area and protect the facility from vandalism and theft, since it contained valuable medication and expensive equipment. But there was no police post for the officers to work in.

"Two things will re-grow a community there — one is health and the other is policing," says McLaughlin. "I knew in order to achieve long-term stability, we needed to have a police station."

When Link told McLaughlin she was an RCMP officer looking to do some charity work, he had just the project for her to lead. He asked her to spearhead the $15,000 fundraising project to build a police station in Ongutoi for the police officers protecting the health centre and surrounding community.

Don McLaughlin

RCMP Cst. Kirsten Link was one of several police volunteers who visited Uganda last spring to help build a police station in the community of Ongutoi.

"In Canada, inside the police station is your haven. But in Uganda, you're out in the bush and there's no safe space," says McLaughlin. "We wanted to provide a secure environment for the police."

BUILDING CAPACITY

Through a golf tournament and several generous donations, Link was able to raise enough money for the police post in just a few months. Before she knew it, she was planning her trip to Uganda alongside Douville, McLaughlin and several other active and retired police officers from the RCMP, Toronto Police Service and York Regional Police.

A group of 14 volunteers made the trek to Ongutoi in the spring of 2017 to volunteer at the health centre and help build the police station.

"It's more than just swinging a hammer," says Douville. "For me, there's a connection with the nurses and doctors — we speak the same language. For the police officers, there was that same sense of camaraderie. They were helping build the police station, but it was also about sharing their trade and skills."

Douville and McLaughlin both agree that having a police officer like Link lead the project added a level of credibility and respect that wouldn't have been possible otherwise.

"There was unanimity of attitude and spirit," says McLaughlin. "We all work under different agencies but there's the underlying 'serve and protect' mentality. We have so much in common."

The police station is now fully operational, with offices, cells, solar panels and a sustainable water source. McLaughlin says the station has helped create a permanent, visible police presence, which sends a message to everyone that they're safe.

"Being a police officer is near and dear to me, so doing something for other police officers is incredibly rewarding," says Link, who hopes to go back to Uganda one day. "To be able to help the Ugandan officers be better at their jobs by providing them with a police station is wonderful. You come back feeling like you've gained more than you've given." ■